



Northwest Regional Entrepreneurship Center

1830 2nd Avenue, Suite 200 - Rock Island, IL 61201-8038

Phone: (309) 788-0943 - Fax: (309) 788-4964

March 16, 2006

E- Centers in Western Illinois Kick off Homeland Security Business Case Competition for Local Businesses

Contest awards will help stimulate innovative business development and support the growth of the homeland security industry in Western Illinois

The Northwest Region Entrepreneurial Center (NWREC) and the Western Illinois Entrepreneurial Center Network (WIECN) are pleased to announce up to \$10,000* in awards as part of the Western Illinois Homeland Security Business Case Competition (WIHSBCC). The contest, funded through the Illinois Entrepreneurial Network's (IEN) challenge grant program, is presented in partnership with the Homeland Security Market Development (HSMD) Bureau, the Homeland Security Innovation and Entrepreneurial Center (HSIEC) at Northwestern University, the Opportunity Returns program and the Rock Island Arsenal Development Group (RIADG).

The contest is intended to accelerate innovation in the homeland security industry by attracting Western Illinois' business community to participate in this \$45 billion market. Companies and entrepreneurs in Illinois' Northwest and West Central regions that have a potential homeland security product or service to commercialize, improve or produce in Illinois are invited to submit a [WIHSBC Challenge Grant application](#). All submission will be reviewed by E-Center Directors Don Henry from NWREC, Sadiq Shah from WIECN and Bret Johnson from HSIEC, as well as representatives from RIADG and a local industry consortium.

Applications will be accepted until Thursday, April 27. All contestants are invited to display their presentations to the public at 9 AM on Tuesday, May 9 at the Rock Island Arsenal.** A press conference announcing the WIHSBCC award winner(s) will follow the exhibit at 10 AM.

Winner(s) will also be invited to apply for an additional award through the HSMD's Innovative Product Grant (IPG) program, which provides up to \$150,000 in funding (with a dollar-for-dollar private capital match) to directly catalyze the commercialization, improvement and production of goods and services with an application in homeland security and a dual use in another sector. Learn more about HSMD and the IPG program @: www.hsmd.illinois.gov.

For more information about the contest, please contact:
NWREC Director Don Henry @ (309) 788-0943 or dhenry@nwrec.org or visit www.nwrec.org.

IEN, HSMD and the Opportunity Returns program are part of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). DCEO has established the challenge grant program to be administered by Entrepreneurship Centers (EC) located throughout Illinois to assist individual entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Learn more about DCEO programs and services at www.illinoisbiz.biz

Learn more about IEN @ www.ienconnect.com

Learn more about NWREC @ www.nwrec.org

Learn more about WIEC @ www.wiuec.org

Lear more about HSIEC @ www.homelandsecurityec.org

* Requires a dollar-for-dollar private capital match

** All attendees must submit their names to Tim Frye at tfrye@riadg.org in advance of the event. Due to Rock Island Arsenal security restrictions, guests of the WIHSBCC showcase event and awards presentation must also be U.S. citizens and display a photo ID.